

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Zhou Enlai Peace Institute, Honolulu and Beijing  
<http://www.zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org>  
[info@zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org](mailto:info@zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org)

## Peace Leaders Honored: Martin Luther King, Queen Lili'uokalani, Nelson Mandela, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa and Zhou Enlai

"The Story" calls for People's Diplomacy, led by former  
Governor Waihe'e, Speaker Emeritus of the House Calvin Say,  
and Professor Maya Soetoro

November 30, 2023

HONOLULU, HAWAII (11-30-23): "Families of Peace" announces release of "The Story" -- a web-based film advocating international peace produced at a recent event in Honolulu. The program honors Dr. Martin Luther King of Georgia, Queen Lili'uokalani of Hawai'i, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi of India, Mother Teresa of Macedonia, Premier Zhou Enlai of China, and the families that made their transformative work possible. Live video includes former Governor Waihe'e of Hawai'i, Speaker Emeritus of the House Calvin Say, and Maya Soetoro, Professor of peace studies at University of Hawai'i. "The Story" is available for viewing to all, at no charge:  
<http://www.zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org/families-of-peace/the-story/>

"Our goal is to probe the role that families play in creating, supporting and sustaining the great peacemakers," said writer-producer Michael North. "The courage, leadership and vision these leaders show in their lives is needed right now, with the threats to peace we see all around us -- from Ukraine to Israel and Gaza, to our own communities. We can understand better: how peace is seeded, planted,

fertilized, nourished, how it flourishes and reproduces-- so we can all do our part to support the fragile organism of peace."

Former Governor [John W. Waihe'e](#) said, "It's exciting, to build diplomacy around people, as opposed to governments. It's a good fit." He observed: "Hawaiian values are based on the principle that if we treat this world well, it will take care of all of us. The need for peacemakers now is greater than ever. This planet is big enough for all of us." Calling for action, he concluded, "Now that we have learned what's happening in the world, the key is, what happens now? The real test is: What do we do about it?"

[Speaker Emeritus Calvin Say](#), the longest-serving State House Speaker in American history, observed, "Learning from our Hawaiian tradition, I understood that the mother taro is the plant that gives new life, so we need to take care of it. She is the source of peace for the community, and the lesson I learned, after more than 40 years of public service, is: 'It's better to give than to receive.'" He concluded, "I want all of you to continue to participate in our goal: peace throughout the world."

[Maya Soetoro](#) is a Professor of Peace Studies at the University of Hawaii. She said, "I help to provide the grassroots energy from which cultural renewal, environmental justice and youth leadership can spring. Maya advised, "Let us privilege community source solutions that are a manifestation of extended family, where we can 'refamiliarize' ourselves with one another, and with the land itself."

The traditional Hawaiian opening was presented by **Kumu Ryan Souza**, who blew the conch shell to the four directions of the wind, and offered a blessing of protection and forgiveness for the gathering: "We ask permission from the 'aina, the land, to be here, and remind us to be connected to each other."

In a tribute to [Reverend Martin Luther King](#), a video excerpt was played from his 1963 speech at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. A key passage, not often heard today, he says, "We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force."

[Queen Lili'uokalani](#), the first and last Queen of the Kingdom of Hawai'i, was recognized. Nalani Olds, celebrated poet and singer, recounted on film the life of the young Queen, as she confronted sorrow and injustice at being deposed by American forces -- and sang her timeless prayer, "Behold not with malevolence the sins of man, but forgive and cleanse..." She later added, "Justice will prevail in the end."

**Meleanna Aluli Meyer**, a teacher and community artist in Hawai'i, amplified the importance of Queen Lili'uokalani based on her lifetime of study and family relationship with the Queen's life and work.

Raj Kumar, the President of the Gandhi International Institute for Peace, has spent a lifetime studying, emulating and extending the work of [Mahatma Gandhi](#). He spoke of the connection of Gandhi's work as an inspiration to Martin Luther King, and added, "The name of Mahatma Gandhi transcends the bounds of race, religion and nation-states, and has emerged as the prophetic voice of the twenty-first century."

[Mother Teresa](#) is a beacon of compassion, who embodied love and empathy. The Families of Peace viewed some excerpts of the feature film, "The Letters," which tells of the personal price that Mother Teresa paid for her service. Her words were understood in fresh light: "Love begins at home, and it is not how much we do...but how much love we put in that action...If you judge people, you have no time to love them..Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

[Nelson Mandela](#) led a global struggle for human rights and racial equality. He championed a peace and reconciliation process, to heal the wounds of the past. In light of the painful challenges faced today by the people of Ukraine, Israel and Gaza, his advice stands up with new meaning: "It always seems impossible until it's done...For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others...Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."

Xiaofang Zhou is the grand-niece of [Zhou Enlai](#), the first premier of modern China -- and a respected global peacemaker. She observed, "Zhou Enlai strived to transform enemies into allies. He lived a life of simplicity and humility, on the same level as all ordinary Chinese people." She told two personal stories, and considered "people's diplomacy," in light of recent meetings with young leaders in Beijing, saying: "They want to rebuild trust between China and America. We are determined to help them. Each one of us is powerful, and the time is now." She finished by challenging the audience: "Are we ready to be Nelson Mandela, today? Martin Luther King? Mahatma Gandhi, today?"

A seventh peacemaker complements the traditional six, representing the original peoples of America and Canada. [Chief Arvol Looking Horse](#) preserves his people's traditions and advocates for peace, justice, and environmental harmony. He is chief of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Oyate, known as the Great Sioux Nation. "[Peace Prayer](#)," a short documentary, was produced for this event. In the film, Chief Arvol recounts the prophecy of the White Buffalo Calf Woman, and "Remember that sacred walk here on the earth. We are at the crossroads. Either we will be faced with chaos, global disasters, and tears from my relatives' eyes. Or we can unite spiritually. As nations upon the earth. All nations, all faiths. One prayer. We can do that."

Other key speakers at the event, whose remarks are captured in "The Story," include **Ralph Cossa**, President Emeritus and Worldwide Support for Development-Handa Haruhisa Chair in Peace Studies of the Pacific Forum, a Honolulu-based leading diplomatic and national security thinktank; **Dr. Chuck Spezzano**, founder of Psychology of Vision, a transpersonal healing model that integrates psychological methods with the concept of grace and family redemption; **Roger Epstein**, who spoke of

his own peacebuilding project -- interconnection between the legal profession in China and the United States; and special guest **Venerable Panekhao**, a Buddhist master from Laos, who traveled from Paris to Hawai'i specially for this event.

He shared: "When you are at peace with yourself, you find a home everywhere. But when you're in trouble, you do not find peace, you do not find a home. When considering the journey to be here today, we said to ourselves, 'We have to go there. It's our family.'"

Writer-producer Michael North described a searing visit to Huairou, a battleground in China. He told of those who helped save the young nation of China through their blood and sacrifice, and establish its identity, and of the common ground they share with those who struggle for peace everywhere.

He suggested, "By telling similar stories to each other, person-to-person, we can begin to communicate again at the level of heart. This renewed foundation supports the resolution of diplomatic, economic, military, health, environment, international security and other complex issues in an enduring, sustainable way."

Follow-up to this event is planned in several dimensions. Families of Peace is an annual event, celebrated each year on November 11. A complete documentary will be produced, together with support materials for schools. An exchange visit to China is planned, for those who attended; and a sponsored visit to France is planned, just before the Paris Olympics in July 2024.

For more information, please send email to [info@zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org](mailto:info@zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org)

contact information: [info@zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org](mailto:info@zhouenlaipeaceinstitute.org)

phone: Michael North; +1-323-422-9602

-30-

